

REMARKS

Claims 1-11 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1 and 4 are amended. The amendments introduce no new matter as they incorporate the subject matter of now-canceled claims 14 and 15. Claims 12-15 are canceled without prejudice to, or disclaimer of, the subject matter recited in those claims. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

Applicants appreciate the indication of allowability regarding claims 14 and 15. The amendments to claims 1 and 4 are taken in light of this indication of allowability. Specifically, claim 1 is amended to include the subject matter of now-canceled claim 14 and claim 4 is amended to include the subject matter of now-canceled claim 15.

Entry of the amendments is proper under 37 C.F.R. §1.116(b)(1) since the amendments place the application in condition for allowance as indicated in the Final Rejection by incorporating allowable subject matter into the independent claims and canceling non-allowed subject matter. Entry of the amendments is thus respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 1 and 3 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over JP-A-09-034412 to Kouichirou in view of JP-A-03-180890 to Kazuhiro et al.; rejects claims 2 and 4-13 over Kouichirou in view of Kazuhiro and varying in view of at least one of U.S. Patents Nos. 5,400,450 to Matsumoto et al., 5,596,082 to Yamazaki, and 5,786,800 to Gyouten. The amendments to claims 1 and 4, incorporating the indicated allowable subject matter of now-cancelled claims 14 and 15, respectively, obviates these rejections with respect to independent claims 1 and 4 and the claims depending therefrom.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdraw of the rejection of claims 1-11 over any combination of the applied prior art references are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-11 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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